

July 15, 1959

Dr. George Lefevre
National Science Foundation
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear George--

I heard only recently that you will be leaving NSF for Harvard. Best wishes to you -- I know you will be missed at NSF, and that geneticists throughout the country will also regret losing your help at the foundation. I suppose you must be concerned about finding a replacement, and I scratched my own head over this (gratuitously) for a few moments. I wonder if you'd thought of Dave Perkins as a possibility. We'd be very sorry indeed to lose him from Stanford, but it can hardly be less important to find the best men for the job in Washington. I have no idea whether Dave would be interested (I suspect he's underpaid in his job in the Biology Department) but I do think he'd suit, on the basis of general temperament no less than his good grasp of the whole field of genetics.

This isn't the main thing I wanted to ask of you however, which is if you could get for me a copy of the Killian subcommittee report on National Information Services which decided a central bureau was not needed. (I can't agree with that conclusion myself-- I think it is one of our most urgent needs in science). This is quoted by James Rand in testimony before the Humphrey Subcommittee for a Dept. of Science (Committee on Govt. Operations, 86th Sen., Subcom. on reorganization; May 28, 1959 Part II, p. 140.)

While I'm asking you about Information, I hope you and Bill Consalazio and Lou Levin and all have taken a hard look at Eugene Garfield's scheme for Citation Indexing as a way out of the abstracting impasse in science. I am completely sold on the idea, and would be even if it were just used as an adjunct to effective subject-indexing. Dwight Gray has the details. I hope Garfield can be more effectively encouraged rather than deflected, as he may feel he has been in the past. This may mean trying to help him work out a better concrete proposal-- the objections to doing this for research projects surely don't apply to this kind of service. Most or all of my colleagues who've sat still long enough to assimilate a proper explanation of this approach have been quite enthusiastic for its utility.

As ever,

Joshua Lederberg